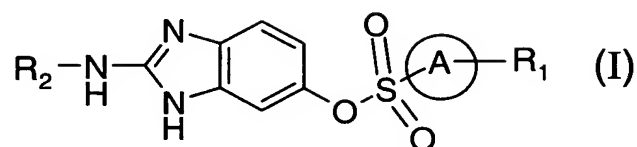


What is claimed is:

1. A compound of formula (I)



wherein

- 5 A is aryl or heteroaryl;

 R₁ is one or more groups selected from:

alkyl optionally substituted by one or more alkoxy, heteroalkyl, aryl, acyl, acyl derivative, halogen, amino, aminoalkyl, aminoalkylamino, hydroxy, hydroxyalkoxy, alkyl, arylalkyl, arylamino or aryloxy;

- 10 alkoxy optionally substituted by one or more alkyl, heteroalkyl, aryl, heteroaryl, alkoxyalkyl, hydroxyalkyl, amide, amino, acyl, acyl derivative, arylalkyl, perfluoroalkoxy, or alkylthio optionally substituted by amide, perfluoroalkylthio, amino, acyl, acyl derivative, alkyl, arylalkyl or aryl;

- 15 aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted by one or more similar or different groups selected from alkyl, alkoxy, nitro, cyano, acyl derivative, perfluoroalkoxy, perfluoroalkyl, heteroaryl, aryloxy, halogen, hydroxyalkyl, amino, mono or dialkylamino, heterocyclylamino, arylamino, heteroarylamino, heterocycloalkyl, perfluoroalkylthio, or alkylthio optionally substituted by amino, acyl, acyl derivative, alkyl, arylalkyl or aryl;

halogen;

NH₂;

- 25 NH-alkyl or NH-cycloalkyl optionally substituted by acyl, acyl derivative, hydroxy, amino, alkoxy, heterocyclyl or aryl;

1-imidazolyl; or

SO₂ Me;

R₂ is:

- 5 -CO-alkyl or -CO-cycloalkyl wherein said -CO-alkyl or -CO-cycloalkyl is optionally substituted by one or more amino, acyl, acyl derivative, alkoxy, aryl, OH, aminoalkyl, aminoalkylamino, hydroxyalkoxy, alkyl, heteroalkyl, arylalkyl, arylamino or aryloxy;
- 10 -CO-aralkyl optionally substituted by one or more similar or different groups selected from alkoxy, halogen, amino, acyl, acyl derivative, alkyl, hydroxyalkyl, mono or dialkylamino, heterocyclylamino, arylamino, heteroaryl, heteroaryl, nitro, heterocycloalkyl, perfluoroalkyl, perfluoroalkoxy, perfluoroalkylthio, or alkylthio optionally substituted by amino, acyl, acyl derivative, alkyl, arylalkyl or aryl;
- 15 -CO-aryl optionally substituted by one or more similar or different groups selected from halogen, alkoxy, alkyl, hydroxyalkyl, alkylthio, amino, mono or dialkylamino, heterocyclylamino, arylamino, heteroaryl, heteroaryl, nitro, heterocycloalkyl, perfluoroalkyl, perfluoroalkoxy, perfluoroalkylthio, or acyl;
- 20 -CO-alkoxy optionally substituted by aryl, amino, acyl, acyl derivative, alkyl, arylalkyl or aryl;
- 25 -CO-amino, -CO-NHR₃, -CO-NR₃R₄ wherein R₃ and R₄ are selected independently from hydrogen, alkyl, hydroxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, fluoroalkyl, alkynyl, heteroalkyl, alkylheteroalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, or together form an alkylene chain optionally containing one to 4 heteroatoms and optionally substituted by one or more amino, aminoalkyl, aminoalkylamino, hydroxy, alkoxy, hydroxyalkoxy, acyl, acyl derivative, alkyl, heteroalkyl, arylalkyl, arylamino, aryloxy or aryl; or
- 30 aryl or aralkyl optionally substituted by one or more similar or different groups selected from heterocycloalkyl, alkyl, aryl, alkoxy, amino, fluoroalkyl, acyl derivative, halogen, hydroxyalkyl, mono or dialkylamino, heterocyclylamino, arylamino, heteroaryl, heteroaryl, nitro, heterocycloalkyl, perfluoroalkyl, perfluoroalkoxy,

perfluoroalkylthio, or alkylthio optionally substituted by amino, acyl, acyl derivative, alkyl, arylalkyl or aryl;

wherein when A is phenyl and R₁ is NH₂, NH-alkyl, NH-cycloalkyl or 1-imidazolyl, said phenyl is substituted at the 4-position with said R₁; and when A is phenyl and R₁ is SO₂Me said phenyl is substituted at the 3-position with said R₁;

with the proviso that when R₂ is -CO-alkoxy, R₁ is NH-cycloalkyl,

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or a prodrug thereof.

2. The compound according to claim 1 wherein acyl is a carboxylic acid or a sulfonic acid and acyl derivative is an alkyl or carbamoyl ester.

10 3. A compound according to claim 2 wherein:

A is aryl or heteroaryl;

R₁ is one or more groups selected from:

alkyl optionally substituted by alkoxy, heteroalkyl, aryl, acyl, acyl derivative, or halogen;

15 alkoxy optionally substituted by alkyl, heteroalkyl, aryl, heteroaryl, alkoxyalkyl, hydroxyalkyl, amide or perfluoroalkoxy, or alkylthio optionally substituted by an amide or perfluoroalkylthio;

20 aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted by one or more alkyl, alkoxy, nitro, cyano, acyl derivative, perfluoroalkoxy, perfluoroalkyl, heteroaryl or aryloxy;

halogen;

NH₂;

NH-alkyl or NH-cycloalkyl optionally substituted by acyl, acyl derivative, hydroxy, amino, alkoxy, heterocyclyl or aryl;

25 1-imidazolyl; or

SO₂ Me;

R₂ is:

- CO-alkyl or -CO-cycloalkyl wherein said -CO-alkyl or -CO-cycloalkyl is optionally substituted by amino, acyl, acyl derivative, alkoxy, aryl or OH;
- 5 -CO-aralkyl optionally substituted by alkoxy, halogen, amino, acyl or acyl derivative;
- CO-aryl optionally substituted halogen, alkoxy, alkyl, hydroxyalkyl, alkylthio, amino, mono or dialkylamino, nitro, perfluoroalkyl, perfluoroalkoxy, perfluoroalkylthio, or acyl;
- 10 -CO-alkoxy optionally substituted by aryl;
- CO-amino, -CO-NHR₃, -CO-NR₃R₄ wherein R₃ and R₄ are selected independently from hydrogen, alkyl, hydroxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, fluoroalkyl, alkynyl, heteroalkyl, alkylheteroalkyl, aryl, aralkyl or together form an alkylene chain optionally containing one to 4
- 15 heteroatoms; or
- aryl or aralkyl optionally substituted by heterocycloalkyl, alkyl, aryl, alkoxy, amino, fluororoalkyl, acyl derivative, or halogen.
4. The compound according to claim 3 wherein A is phenyl, thiophenyl, isoxazolyl, oxazolyl, pyrazolyl, furanyl or pyridinyl.
- 20 5. The compound according to claim 4 wherein A is phenyl.
6. The compound according to claim 5 wherein R₁ is NH-cycloalkyl and R₂ is -CO-alkoxy.
7. The compound according to claim 6 wherein the compound is methyl-5-(4-cyclopentylaminophenylsulfonyloxy) benzimidazole-2-carbamate.

8. The compound according to claim 5 wherein R₁ is 1-imidazolyl or cyclopentylamino and R₂ is -CO-alkyl optionally substituted by amino, acyl, acyl derivative, alkoxy, aryl or OH.

9. The compound according to claim 8 wherein the compound is selected from
5 the group consisting of:

N-[5-(4-imidazol-1-yl-benzenesulfonyloxy)-1H-benzoimidazol-2-yl]-succinamic acid methyl ester,

N-[5-(4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonyloxy)-1H-benzoimidazol-2-yl]-succinamic acid methyl ester,

10 4-[5-(4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonyloxy)-1H-benzoimidazol-2-yl]carbamoylester, butyric acid methyl ester, and

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(2-methoxy-acetyl)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester.

10. The compound according to claim 5 wherein R₁ is alkoxy, 1-imidazolyl, or
15 NH-alkyl or NH-cycloalkyl optionally substituted by acyl, acyl derivative, hydroxy, amino, alkoxy, heterocyclyl or aryl and R₂ is -CO-amino, -CO-NHR₃, -CO-NR₃R₄ wherein R₃ and R₄ are selected independently from hydrogen, alkyl, hydroxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, fluoroalkyl, alkynyl, heteroalkyl, alkylheteroalkyl, aryl, aralkyl or together form an alkylene chain optionally containing one to 4 heteroatoms.

20 11. The compound according to claim 10 selected from the group consisting of:

N-[5-(4-[imidazolyl]-phenylsulfonyloxy)-1H-benzimidazole-2-yl]-methylurea,

N-[5-(4-cyclopentylaminophenylsulfonyloxy)-1H-benzimidazole-2-yl]-methylurea,

N-[5-(4-cyclopentylaminophenylsulfonyloxy)-1H-benzimidazole-2-yl]-dimethylurea,

4-Cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3-isopropyl-ureido)-1H-benzoimidazol-
25 5-yl ester,

4-Cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3-butyl-ureido)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-Imidazol-1-yl-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-fluoro-phenyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

5 4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-fluoro-phenyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(3-methoxy-phenyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(4-methoxy-phenyl)-ureido]-1H-
10 benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(4-chloro-phenyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(3-fluoro-benzyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

15 4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(3-chloro-phenyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3-isobutyl-ureido)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-dimethylamino-ethyl)-ureido]-1H-
20 benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3-ethyl-ureido)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-methoxy-ethyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(4-dimethylamino-phenyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3-tert-butyl-ureido)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

5 4-[(tetrahydro-furan-2-ylmethyl)-amino]-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3-methyl-ureido)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-imidazol-1-yl-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3-phenyl-ureido)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

10 4-imidazol-1-yl-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(3-fluoro-phenyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-imidazol-1-yl-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-hydroxy-ethyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-imidazol-1-yl-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(4-fluoro-phenyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

15 4-imidazol-1-yl-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-chloro-benzyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-imidazol-1-yl-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-fluoro-benzyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

20 4-imidazol-1-yl-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[(azetidine-1-carbonyl)-amino]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-imidazol-1-yl-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3-benzyl-ureido)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3-phenyl-ureido)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-hydroxy-ethyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(4-fluoro-phenyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

5 4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-chloro-benzyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-fluoro-benzyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

10 4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[(azetidine-1-carbonyl)-amino]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3-benzyl-ureido)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(3-hydroxy-propyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

15 4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(1,1-dimethyl-propyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(4-hydroxy-butyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

20 4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-hydroxy-1-methyl-ethyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-[(tetrahydro-furan-2-ylmethyl)-amino]-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-hydroxy-ethyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-[(tetrahydro-furan-2-ylmethyl)-amino]-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(3-hydroxy-propyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

- 4-[(tetrahydro-furan-2-ylmethyl)-amino]-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(4-hydroxy-butyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 4-[(tetrahydro-furan-2-ylmethyl)-amino]-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-methoxy-1-methyl-ethyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 5 4-[(tetrahydro-furan-2-ylmethyl)-amino]-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3-ethyl-ureido)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester.
- 4-(2-methoxy-ethylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-ethyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 4-(2-hydroxy-1-methyl-ethylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-methoxy-ethyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 10 4-(2-hydroxy-1-methyl-ethylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-ethyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 4-benzyloxy-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-methoxy-ethyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 15 4-(2-morpholin-4-yl-ethylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-methoxy-ethyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 4-[(piperidin-4-ylmethyl)-amino]-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-methoxy-ethyl)-ureido]-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester, and
- 4-(2-hydroxy-3-methoxy-propylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[3-(2-hydroxy-3-methoxy-propyl)-ureido]-3H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester.
- 20
12. The compound according to claim 5 wherein R_2 is $-\text{CO-cycloalkyl}$.
13. The compound according to claim 12 wherein R_2 is $-\text{CO-cyclopropyl}$.
14. The compound according to claim 13 selected from the group consisting of:

4-benzylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-methylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

5 4-(2-hydroxy-ethylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-(3-hydroxy-propylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

10 4-(4-hydroxy-butylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-(2-methoxy-1-methyl-ethylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-(2-pyrrolidin-1-yl-ethylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

15 4-(1-hydroxymethyl-propylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-(2-hydroxy-1-methyl-ethylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

20 4-(2-piperidin-1-yl-ethylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-(3-pyrrolidin-1-yl-propylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-(3-hydroxy-2,2-dimethyl-propylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

- 4-[3-(4-methyl-piperazin-1-yl)-propylamino]-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 4-(2-methoxy-benzylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 5 4-(2-diethylamino-ethylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 4-(1*S*-hydroxymethyl-propylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 4-(2-morpholin-4-yl-ethylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 10
- 4-(1-aza-bicyclo[2.2.2]oct-3-ylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 4-(2*R*-carbamoyl-pyrrolidin-1-yl)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 15 4-(2-piperazin-1-yl-ethylamino)-benzene-sulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 4-(2-carbamoyl-cyclohexylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 4-(2-acetyl-amino-ethylamino)-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 20
- 4-[2-(2-amino-ethylamino)-ethylamino]-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,
- 4-[2-(1H-imidazol-4-yl)-ethylamino]-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-[(pyridin-2-ylmethyl)-amino]-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropane-carbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-cyclobutylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester, and

- 5 4-[2-(2-hydroxy-ethoxy)-ethylamino]-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(cyclopropanecarbonyl-amino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester.

15. The compound according to claim 5 wherein R₁ is cyclopentylamino and R₂ is aryl or aralkyl optionally substituted by heterocycloalkyl, alkyl, aryl, alkoxy, amino, fluororoalkyl, acyl derivative, or halogen.

- 10 16. The compound according to claim 15 selected from the group consisting of:

4-cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3,4-dimethoxy-phenylamino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-Cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-phenylamino-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

- 15 4-Cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(4-morpholin-4-yl-phenylamino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-Cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3,5-dimethyl-phenylamino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

- 20 4-Cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(4-methoxy-phenylamino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-Cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(4-dimethylamino-phenylamino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

4-Cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-(3-methoxy-5-trifluoromethyl-phenylamino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester,

3-[5-(4-Cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonyloxy) -1H-benzoimidazol-2-ylamino]-benzoic acid ethyl ester, and

4-Cyclopentylamino-benzenesulfonic acid 2-[(4-(4-methyl-piperazin-1-yl) -phenylamino)-1H-benzoimidazol-5-yl ester.

- 5 17. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of formula (I) according to claim 1 and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable adjuvants or diluents.
18. A method of treating a patient for cancer comprising administering to said patient a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of formula (I) according to
- 10 claim 1.